Buddha In A Business Suit

The Art of Heartful Management

by Marc J. Fine



Illustration by Eduardo Gutekunst

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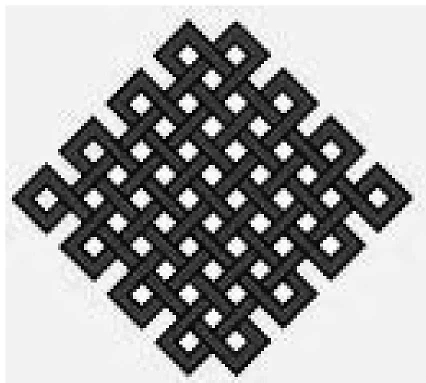
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Introduction

How to Succeed in Business Without Losing your Heart and Soul



Compassion + Skillful Means = Wisdom

When both myself and others

Are similar in that we wish to be happy,

What is so special about me?

Shantideva, a Buddhist saint

Tales from Tibet (and beyond)

Five thousand years ago, in a part of Asia now called Nepal, a son was born to a Brahmin - an upper caste Indian king. Before he was born, it was prophesied that Siddhartha (the future Buddha) would either grow up himself to be a great ruler, or he would abandon his kingdom and become a renunciate. In an attempt to avoid the latter fate, his parents raised him in a very sheltered environment and tried to protect him from suffering.

One day, while hunting outside the walls of his castle, Siddhartha saw an old man who was very sickly, and he realized that everyone is vulnerable and may fall sick. Then, he saw an old woman, who was barely able to see or walk. And he realized that all beings must grow old. He then witnessed a corpse burning on a funeral pyre. At that moment he realized that all beings must die.

In that short time, the veil of illusion was lifted from his eyes, and he realized that his privileged life was meaningless and false. He was determined to leave his protected life, and search for "truth" in the outside world.

How many people do you know (perhaps this includes someone sitting in your seat right now!) who have done very well in their careers, and yet don't quite feel content, are missing a deep sense of satisfaction and purpose? Many people who have "made it" talk about their student days as being the happiest times of their lives. And this was at a point when they had little money and few material possessions.

I'm not suggesting that we all go back to living in poverty, but I am proposing that we look at a broader definition of success, and explore ways to bring our lives into balance. And this, of course, includes our work lives.

Buddha in a Business Suit goes beyond the "art of management" to the "heart of management" and shows you how to be a *Heartful Manager* -- a powerful, effective person who gets things done in a skillful and compassionate manner while providing service to self, community, and the environment.

Although it draws from the deep well of Eastern spiritual teachings, this book is not about becoming a Buddhist. It offers simple and profound advice that will serve you regardless of your background or spiritual outlook, and shows you how to do whatever it is you're doing better -- while living in a state of contentment and happiness.

Here's a quick look at of some of the Buddhist concepts you'll learn about in this book:

1. *Dharma*: A Spiritual Road Trip with the Buddha
2. *The Middle Path*: Balance in the Pursuit of Moderation
3. *Compassion*: The Benefits of Selfish Altruism
4. *Wisdom*: Being With 'What Is'

5. *Impermanence*: Here Today, Gone Tomorrow
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7. *Skillful Means*: Putting Your Notion in Motion
8. *Karma*: Spiritual Laws, Gravity and other Heavy Matters
9. *Right Livelihood*: State-of-the-Heart Careers
10. *Emptiness*: The possibility of possibility

<u>How this books is organized:</u>

Each chapter begins with an illuminating story, **Tales from Tibet (and Beyond),** followed by a short exposition that describes certain aspects of Buddhist thought and practice as they apply to business. At the end of each chapter, you will find ❁ **Lotus Lessons**❁, a short story, exercise, or guide for action, that will help you apply the principles of *Heartful Management* in your life and in your work.



The lotus blossom, traditionally a symbol of prosperity, grows in mud at the bottom of a pond. It raises itself above the water to reveal its beauty, and represents the soul rising from the confusion of matter into the clarity of enlightenment.

1. Tibetan Buddhism's Journey To The West

The Long March



Don't try to use what you learn from Buddhism to be a Buddhist;

use it to be a better whatever-you-already-are.

Tenzin Gyatso, the 14th Dalai Lama

Tales from Tibet (and beyond)

About 800 years ago, the powerful Indian master Padmasambhava (Guru Rinpoche) made the rugged journey from India to Tibet, creating a Buddhist civilization in the face of a harsh environment. This was no job for the faint-hearted. He and other spiritual warriors successfully introduced Buddhism in spite of great obstacles and hardship. Building a pervasive and enduring system, they worked out the secret of acting with compassion while (so to speak) increasing market share.

For centuries, Tibet was shrouded in mystery. Frankly, Tibetans wanted nothing to do with the outside world. In 1950, China invaded Tibet, resulting in the death of over one million Tibetans and the imprisonment and torture of vast numbers of monks and nuns. The Dalai Lama, spiritual and temporal leader of Tibet, escaped along with over 100,000 others across the border into India. As an indirect result of this tragedy, we in the West have had the benefit of learning about Tibet's spiritual approach to life directly from the refugees who fled their country.

What is unique to Tibetan Buddhism (known as Mahayana Buddhism), compared to the Buddhism of Southeast Asia, is the stress on transformation. Rather than simply avoiding harmful things such as anger and attachment, the practitioner learns how to use these impulses to break down the ego-grasping tendencies of the self, and to transform this energy into *heartful*, loving, compassionate wisdom energy.

Mahayana Buddhists believe that certain people are here to teach and help us. They are called *Bodhisattvas*. A *Bodhisattva* is a person who already has attained a considerable degree of enlightenment and seeks to use his or her wisdom to help other human beings become liberated themselves. If you are lucky, you will meet one (or many) in your life. You should strive to become one yourself someday!

❃ Lotus Lessons ❃

At times, business may seem to involve aspects of a battlefield, with its attendant skirmishes, but it can also be a stage for spiritual growth. Even in a highly competitive business, there is much to be gained by following the lead of Tibet's "spiritual warriors."

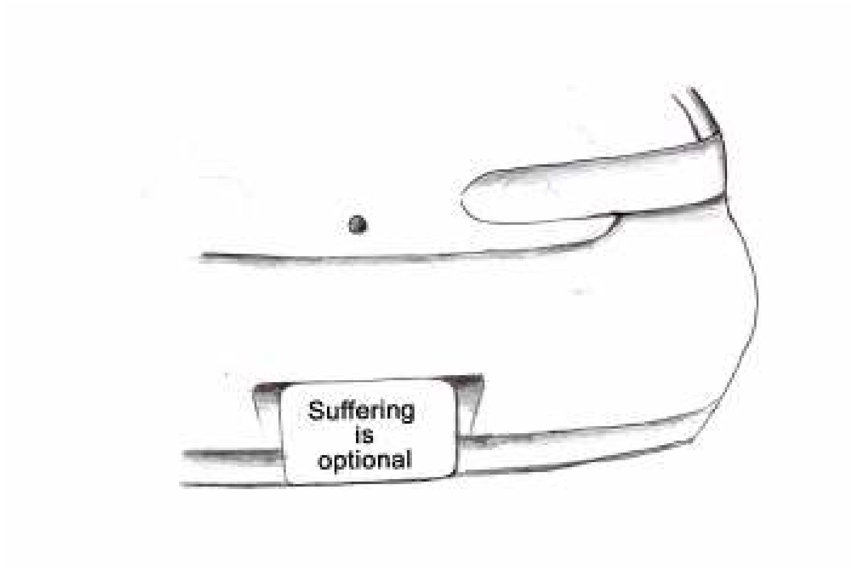
Rabbi Michael Lerner founded Tikkun magazine several years ago as a way of expressing his vision of creating a world where everyone wins. The ancient Hebrew word, "Tikkun" means to heal or repair. Tikkun, the spirit of bringing together and healing, is one of the most powerful expressions of compassion we can bring to our lives and to business.

Through years of struggle, his magazine has managed to stay afloat and have a profound impact on its readers and public policy. Michael's advocacy of the "politics of meaning" has been embraced not only by Tikkun's readers, but by politicians and policy makers at every level of public life. The idea behind the politics of meaning is that people need more in their lives than material comforts. They need purpose, community, and connection. Without them, there is little meaning. Violence is an unfortunate expression of this despair.

Exercise: What have you learned from adversity? Did those experiences make you stronger? In hindsight, were they of benefit to you? Where would you be today without having had those experiences?

2. Dharma

A Spiritual Road Trip with the Buddha



Bumper Sticker Wisdom

We can never obtain peace in the world

if we neglect the inner world

and don't make peace with ourselves.

Tensin Gyatso, The 14th Dalai Lama

Tales from Tibet (and beyond)

One of his students asked the Buddha, "Are you the savior?"

"No", answered the Buddha.

"Then are you a healer?"

"No", the Buddha replied.

"Are you a teacher?" the student persisted.

"No, I am not a teacher."

"Then what are you?" asked the student.

"I am awake," the Buddha replied.

The Buddha spent years getting in touch with "what is." When at last he grasped the true nature of reality, he gained an understanding of the causes of suffering. And more importantly, the way out.

The *Dharma* is the collection of teachings that define the Buddhist path. In essence, the *Dharma* is "that which holds one back from suffering." Buddha's teachings are summarized in *The Four Noble Truths:*

1. **There is suffering in the world.**

Besides sickness, old age, and death, there are natural and man made catastrophes, not to mention our self-inflicted suffering. Suffering is pervasive. Do you think anyone can get through life without any suffering?

2. The causes of suffering are ignorance and attachment.

Ignorance and attachment to desires lead to anger, fear, grasping, closed mindedness, pride, and jealousy, which all contribute to suffering.

3. This suffering is unnecessary.

This is good news! There is a way out. And it is accessible to everyone.

4. The way to eliminate suffering is through awareness and letting go of attachments.

This leads to wisdom.

That there is pain and suffering in the world seems rather obvious. On an elementary level, not having our basic needs met (for safety, food, and shelter) causes suffering.

Looking further, it appears that there are many more types of suffering. Sometimes just wanting something we don't have causes dissatisfaction, which is a form of suffering. We want that new account, a promotion, or a raise. If we don't get it, we are unhappy.

Often, even when we *do* get what we want, we are still unhappy. We worry that we might lose what we have, and many times the happiness we expected from getting what we wanted just doesn't come. That is a more subtle form of suffering.

And finally, at the deepest level, there is the suffering of existence: we must all die, nothing lasts, everything is empty and meaningless. This sounds so depressing! Must it be so?

There is a paradox in Buddha's teachings: All life is suffering, yet there is a way to eliminate suffering. How can this be? It's like the bumper sticker that reads: "Pain is part of life. Suffering is optional." That is to say, it's not *what* we have to deal with, but it's *how* we deal with what life throws us that creates our experience.

The *Dharma* teaches that if we see and accept the way the world is, we can not only transcend suffering, but can actually use it to transform our attachments into feelings of compassion. And since we're all in this together, we can use this awareness of suffering to generate compassion for everyone we come in contact with.

No matter how hopeless, confused, ignorant, miserable, or deluded we are, at our core is pure wisdom and total accepting love. This is our Buddha nature. The teachings show how to end suffering by tapping into this clear state of consciousness.

Once we grasp the teachings, we can find refuge from suffering, and can begin to serve others more effectively. We will certainly strive not to add to another's suffering. There's enough of that already.

❁ Lotus Lessons ❁

Nobody leaves their problems at home (no matter how often we may tell them to.) While everyone around you is falling apart and getting upset, you need to be the mindful one. First, just listen. The content is hardly ever the message. You need to find out what's behind the feelings of anger or frustration.

As a manger, you probably have many experiences with staff and others when they are suffering. They won't always come right out and let you know what's bothering them. More often, they will be a bit "off": crabby, argumentative, or uncommunicative.

I once had an employee who got a speeding ticket on her way to work one day. She got to the office and immediately started complaining and dumping on people. I called her into my office and asked her how things were going. After patiently listening to her litany of injustices and wrongdoings, she eventually calmed down and was able to work in a more productive manner.

As is so often the case, the cause of her behavior had nothing to do with work. There was no problem to solve, nothing to do. Understanding, listening, and a kind, supportive word were all that was required.

Exercise: Contemplate the suffering you've experience in your life. Can you see that everyone… people you work with, your family, people you care for, people you dislike, people you don't even know…everyone is in the same boat? Does that change how you act toward them?

3. The Middle Path

Balance in the Pursuit of Moderation



"Everything exists." This is one extreme.

"Everything does not exist." This is the other extreme.

Not approaching either extreme,

the Buddha teaches you a doctrine by the middle way.

Tales from Tibet (and beyond)

During his search for enlightenment, the Buddha first sought happiness through the pleasures of his senses and by acquiring possessions. This approach only led to more suffering. He then tried extreme asceticism and self-mortification, fasting almost to the point of death. That didn't work either. He concluded that neither of these extremes was useful.

Through contemplation, meditation, and personal experience, the Buddha determined that the Middle Path was the antidote to suffering and life's extremes.

The Buddhist Middle Path exemplifies flexibility and reveals a world made up of many colors, not just black and white. When we apply this understanding to business, we are able to avoid extremes, see all sides of an issue, and increase our chances for success. Taking the Middle Path enhances our vision, knowledge, and leads to calm and insight.

In your business, how much of your focus is on money, and how much on mission? Can you see the problems that arise if you take an extreme view? Both are important, both must be honored.

How do you deal with conflicts or disagreements in your organization? Have you ever found that compromise, or "splitting the difference" can sometimes make things worse? There is another way. Some people call this "thinking outside the box," in which you are able to come up with new, creative solutions that are far more powerful than the "solutions" you were originally considering.

In order for you to win, it doesn't mean somebody else must lose. It is possible and desirable that everyone wins. You may prevail over someone, but in doing so, you will have planted the seeds of future problems. Be assured the effects will come to fruition sooner or later. Ultimately, everyone must win or no one wins.

❅ Lotus Lessons ❅

Remodeling can be a real challenge. It seems everyone at our Community Clinic had their own idea of how things should be. It was a difficult project, because our funds were limited, and there were many constraints on what we could do as opposed to what we wanted to do. After countless meetings with the architects and members of my executive staff, we finally came up with drawings, but it was for a design nobody was really pleased with, because there were so many compromises. We needed to put in wheelchair access and enlarge the waiting room, and at the same time, the physicians wanted larger offices (preferably with windows.) Everyone was lobbying for their pet projects: more space, more light, larger exam rooms... It seemed quite impossible to please everyone, and it finally ended up looking as if no one was going to be happy with the outcome.

After allowing for two weeks of discussion and review, I announced that the plans were final, we would being construction shortly. The staff petitioned me and asked for one more week. I couldn't see the point of delaying the project any longer. It felt as if we had beaten this thing into the ground, but I gave them another week. The staff (everyone from physicians to clerks) met every night that week, and presented some suggestions along with drawings which were, frankly, outstanding. They had come up with creative solutions that the executive staff and the architects hadn't even considered. It was a humbling experience. We incorporated these ideas into the remodeling project and got a new clinic that everyone -- patients, community, and staff -- was happy with.

Exercise: Consider a business problem you've had recently that seemed to require a "black or white" decision. List as many solutions as you can that reflects a more balanced approach. Can you see how avoiding extremes might suggest a more creative solution? Can you commit to creating win-win solutions in all your dealings, both professional and personal?

4. Compassion

The Benefits of Selfish Altruism



Just as a mother would protect her only child

even at risk of her own life,

even so let one cultivate a boundless heart towards all beings.

Buddha, from the Metta-sutta

Tales from Tibet (and beyond)

The monk Asanga spent twelve years in a cave trying to conjure up a vision of Maitreya, the future Buddha. Having had no success, he gave up and went into town. There, he saw a dog lying in the street that had been terribly injured, with maggots growing in its wounds.

Although initially repulsed, he felt compelled to help the dog. However, he found that when he tried to pick the maggots up with his fingers he crushed them. So he decided to remove them with his tongue, so as not to harm them. He closed his eyes, lowered his head toward the dog, but his face went down and hit the ground.

Surprised, he looked up and saw Maitreya instead of the dying dog. "What's going on?" he demanded.

Maitreya replied, "This act of compassion is what it took for you to see me."

Compassion is the profound sense of concern for the well-being of others, and an inclination to give aid or support. It is the cornerstone of all Buddhist spiritual practice and of *Heartful Management*. Compassion is the recognition that we are all connected and can therefore feel deep regard for others.

Compassion inclines us to work not only for our own benefit, but for the benefit and well-being of others as well. In fact, the primary reason Buddhists even *attempt* to achieve spiritual enrichment is so that they can more effectively benefit others.

We have a lot in common with others to the extent that we all want the same things -- to be happy and to feel good about ourselves. And we all wish to avoid things that make us unhappy. If we view everyone, even so-called "difficult people" with this in mind, we can better understand them, and see them as allies rather than adversaries.

The Dalai Lama suggests that even if we can't see the benefits of practicing compassion for its own sake, that we do it from the position of what he calls "selfish altruism." That is, to see that it is in our own best self-interest to practice compassion. He proposes that if, through our actions and feelings of compassion, we can help end the suffering of angry, unhappy people, they would treat everyone (including us) better, and the world would be a much nicer place. So it is only logical to want to help others, because this is a way of helping ourselves.

❁ Lotus Lessons ❁

Although we all dread disasters, they do sometimes help bring people together. For example, during a fire several years ago, many people lost all their possessions, and thousands of homes were destroyed, leaving many homeless.

In response to this crisis, businesses in the area donated food and materials, and large numbers of people spontaneously became volunteer workers, providing food and shelter for those in need. Even people who did not know each other or normally associate with each other pitched in to help.

This clearly demonstrates that beneath our self-interest lies a deep sense of compassion and concern for the well-being of others. It is unfortunate that it takes a crisis to bring this out. These feelings are always present, and can be accessed any time.

Our customers, co-workers, competitors, clients, suppliers, and colleagues will all respond to our kindness. What difference would it make in our life if we were to treat everyone we encountered in business with compassion? Taking this step, without attachment to achieving any result, is very important, and takes courage and faith. It may take time to transform a situation, and the benefits may not be immediately obvious, but in the long run, it is worth it.

Extra Credit: Imagine that each person you meet was, at one time, your mother, and was very kind to you. If this is so, how could you possibility wish them any harm? This view helps us to find room for compassion for everyone, regardless of how much they might anger or irritate us.

5. Wisdom

Being With 'What Is'



Laughing Buddha

May I perfect all the virtues
For which all embodied beings hope
And may I always relieve
The sufferings of all sentient beings.

Nagarjuna, an Indian Saint

Tales from Tibet (and beyond)

A young Buddhist monk left his room late one afternoon to begin his rounds of daily prayer. On his way to the meditation hall, he saw a farmer taking a nap, leaning up against a statue of the Buddha.

"How dare you desecrate Lord Buddha this way!" exclaimed the monk, shaking the farmer awake. "Don't you know that the holy spirit is in this statue?"

"Please show me someplace where the holy spirit is not, and I shall use that as a pillow," retorted the farmer.

Wisdom is the result of seeing life in its totality, without prejudice or judgment, and accepting all of the beauty, ugliness, love, pain, suffering, confusion, uncertainty, ecstasy, bliss, and strangeness of the world exactly as it is (and is not.) Living in wisdom offers a life in which you are awake, aware, enthusiastic, and -- most important -- leading a balanced, happy life.

It is very demanding to maintain this level of awareness. It's human nature to dwell in the past, daydream about the future, and to attach meaning and interpretation to everything that happens. Staying in the present can be difficult, but it is necessary for transformation.

Buddhist practitioners guard the actions of body, speech, and mind, avoiding what is harmful to both others and self. This discipline allows them to refrain from self-centered or harmful activities.

This may sound very somber, but there is a lightness and sweetness to this that transcends solemnity. Joy comes with the recognition that "what is" may not seem ideal, but on some level it is perfect. When you bring Wisdom to your workplace, you will empower not only yourself, but those around you.

❁ Lotus Lessons ❁

Mary H. started her small business, Mary's Futons, many years ago in her garage. As a young, inexperienced business person, she was determined to produce only the finest bedroom furniture. Mary was committed to quality and customer service. I asked her how she explained her success.

"Community involvement" was her answer. "Everybody knows me, I'm really out there," she said. "They don't even know my real name, they just know me as Futon Mary."

She sees her business as an extension of her personal desire to provide a service to her community.

She is an activist and an instigator. As her business grew, she added more lines, and moved into a larger storefront. She follows her gut, and rarely misses a good opportunity. She spends a lot of time and resources on employee training, and feels it's important they feel appreciated. She believes all merchants have a responsibility to their community. She sings, and is happy. I've been her customer for years, and send all my friends to her. She only has a few employees, but she is successful in all the ways that are important to her: she is profitable, loves her job, and has made a lot of people happy. Her customers are her friends. She embodies Heartful Management.

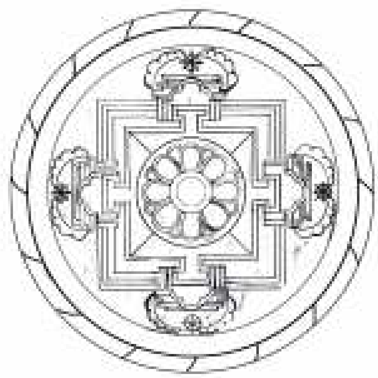
Have you ever noticed that the people with the most awareness tend to laugh and smile a lot, and are very light-hearted? Can you bring some of this energy into your

workplace? It will transform things faster than any number of edicts, memos, workshops, or training sessions.

Exercise: A "thought experiment" you might try out is this – Buddhists consider that anyone you meet might be a Buddha. But you'd never know it, unless you were a Buddha yourself. They might be cranky, off-putting, living on the street…they can appear in many guises. Since you don't know, it's best to treat everyone, rich and poor, friendly or hostile, with respect. They could be a Buddha, here to teach you a lesson.

6. Impermanence

Here Today, Gone Tomorrow



The Sand Mandala is a Tibetan Buddhist tradition which symbolizes the transitory nature of things

---

All birth ends in death

All creation ends in dissolution

All accumulation ends in dispersion

All that appears real is transitory...

Come drink the elixir of fearlessness.

Nagarjuna, an Indian Saint

Tales from Tibet (and beyond)

A few years ago, a very disturbed woman destroyed a beautiful sand painting (Mandala) that several monks had spent days meticulously creating at the Asian Art Museum in San Francisco. The police restrained the woman, and she was taken away for observation.

The monks were asked if they were angry or upset about their work having been destroyed.

"Not at all," they answered," we weren't even thinking about that. We had just been meditating on impermanence, and we were praying that this poor woman could find some inner peace."

It is not comfortable or fashionable to talk about death. But as you look about you, do we see anyone who is going to be walking around the planet in 100 years? Many of the people we see may not even be alive next year. Or next month. None of us knows when our time will come. The same is true for our jobs, possessions and relationships. We can't count on holding on to them. We act as if everything we have, everything around us, will always be here. But nothing is permanent; everything changes, including us. That is the nature of life.

Once we acknowledge the truth of this, including the fact of our own mortality, it's as if a terrible burden has been lifted from our shoulders. We can truly live in the present and appreciate everything that happens as a precious gift.

Compassion and the acknowledgement that all life is change go hand in hand. This allows us to be flexible, rather than rigid, in our lives, and in our work. We can let go of things, have a lighter, more flexible attitude. Things will work out better this way.

❁ Lotus Lessons ❁

When my uncle, Elmer Baum, lent the two Steves (Jobs and Wozniak) some money to buy parts to build the first Apple Computer in his garage, he was caught up in the dream and excitement they had about the possibilities of creating something new and wonderful -- a personal computer for the rest of us. Part of the reason for Apple's success was because everyone involved in the venture believed it could happen. They had a vision, and weren't wasting any time with negative thoughts about how difficult or impossible their task would be. One of the founders, Steve Wozniak offered the original design to Hewlett Packard, his old employer. They didn't want it. I.B.M. sat on their thumbs and watched this little upstart company create a huge market that would soon stall their mainframe business.

Vision and passion, combined with skillful means, can change the world.

Try to identify something that is fixed (permanent) in your life, something that has never changed, and never will change. It's not possible, is it? Can you see the futility of trying to hold on to things? And the freedom that comes from letting go and acceptance?

This is as true in business as in any other aspect of your life. You may be the market leader one day, and displaced by a competitor the next.

Exercise: What are you holding on to? Can you let it go? Not to worry. There's nothing wrong. Move on.

7. Karma

Spiritual Laws, Gravity and other Heavy Matters



If we want apples, we plant an apple seed. If we plant tomatoes, we don't expect to get watermelons.

Karma is not something complicated or philosophical.
Karma means watching your body, watching your mouth,
and watching your mind.
Trying to keep these three doors as pure
as possible is the practice of karma.
Lama Thubten Yeshe

Tales from Tibet (and beyond)

When I was in India in 1989, a group of us were invited to have tea with Choegyal Rinpoche, a Tibetan monk. We asked him how he came to live in India, and he told us the following story:

When the Chinese invaded Tibet in the 1950's, they attacked his monastery. He and a few other monks escaped by running into the hills above the village. Looking down from his hiding place, he saw soldiers beating his friends, destroying religious artifacts, and setting fire to the temple. Telling this story, he had tears in his eyes.

"That must have been terrible to see such harm done to you and your friends," I said.

"Yes, of course I am feeling bad for them, but I am crying now because of the Chinese soldiers. I am feeling such great sadness and compassion for them. They had no idea about the harm they were doing to themselves, the negative Karma they were generating through their ignorance."

There are spiritual laws operating which apply as much to the business world as to our personal lives. Although more subtle than physical laws, they are every bit as powerful and pervasive. We have a healthy respect for physical laws (such as gravity) because we are familiar with them. And we pay attention to them because we don't want to suffer the consequences of not paying attention to them (like falling off a cliff, for instance). Since spiritual laws can be more subtle, and their effects may not be as immediate, we tend to ignore them. Yet we still suffer the consequences when we do, just as surely as if we were to ignore any of Newton's laws.

Buddhists embrace precepts which are fairly universal -- prohibitions against killing, stealing, dishonesty -- all very familiar to the Westerner. However, there are some subtle laws, such as the concepts of Karma, right livelihood, and the inter-relatedness of all people, that gives Buddhism a special richness.

Karma is the Sanskrit term for the law of action, cause, and effect. Karma describes the consequences of our actions. All actions give birth to effects that are the results of those actions. Some of us in the West use the word Karma in more of a “punishment-and-reward” sense than Buddhists do. We think in terms of *good* Karma and *bad* Karma. That is, if we do something bad, we are punished (bad Karma); if we do something good, we are rewarded (good Karma).

Buddhists have a different way of understanding this concept. They view Karma as a fundamental principle of how the universe works, without the judgment of good or bad, reward or sin.

The law of Karma does not imply we don't exercise free will. At each moment, we can choose how we act, thereby affecting our future Karma. Rather than being a nihilistic philosophy, Buddhism is about choice.

The metaphor of a garden is often used to describe Karma: if we want apples, we plant an apple seed. If we plant tomatoes, we don't expect to get watermelons. To carry this metaphor a step further, we can consider that good or bad deeds, like fruit, can ripen.

This analogy applies to everything done in business. If we remain mindful of how every choice we make, every transaction in which we are involved, and each venture we pursue carries the seeds of both our intent and our actions far into the future, we will naturally learn to be careful about how we do business.

Every action or inaction has a consequence. That is, we cannot *not* make a decision. On some level, everything we do arises out of choice. Since results follow our actions or inactions, we might as well be pro-active and consciously make a choice to act.

❁ Lotus Lessons ❁

I once worked for one of the fastest growing high-tech companies in Silicon Valley, with sales of over $250 million a year. But the seeds of its destruction were planted in its early years. Getting the product out the door at any cost (including shipping non-functioning equipment) was more important than providing customer satisfaction. It became increasingly difficult to sell equipment once the company got a reputation for being more interested in sales than in supporting its customers. We were our own worse enemy. Within a few years, the stock dipped from a high of over $25/share to less than $3/share.

It is useful to reflect on our successes and failures, and to consider how our actions influenced the outcome. This is not to arrive at blame or kudos, but to see our role in how events unfold. If we practice this analysis regularly, we have taken a significant step towards being a Heartful Manager.

The next time someone yells at you or mistreats you and you are tempted to yell back or retaliate, stop. Think about it. If you react, you are only creating the seeds for someone to abuse you in the future. Here's your chance to "nip it in the bud." If you are patient, don't react, and can be kind and compassionate, you are creating the conditions for kindness to appear in your future.

Put this powerful realization into practice, and watch for the results.

8. Emptiness And Potential

The Possibility of Possibility



Momos (Tibetan Dumplings)

Know all things to be like this:

As a magician makes illusions

Of horses, oxen, carts and other things,

Nothing is as it appears.

The Buddha

Tales from Tibet (and beyond)

Khampa warriors are fierce fighters who come from the remote Eastern section of Tibet. They are famous for their horseback riding skills. One day, an elder's favorite horse ran off. His neighbors tried to console him, and told him how terrible it was, because horses were so valuable.

"Maybe bad, maybe not so bad, who knows?" answered the warrior.

A few days later, the horse returned, leading a herd of twenty wild horses it had rounded up.

"That's fantastic good luck!" his friends exclaimed." You are truly a wealthy man now."

"Maybe good, maybe not so good. Who knows?" responded the warrior.

A few days later, the warriors eldest son was injured trying to tame the horses. It was clear he would never ride a again.

"What a terrible tragedy!" his father's friends told him.

"Maybe it is, but who knows?" answered the man.

A few days later, news came to the village that a group of Khampa warriors attacking a Chinese settlement had all been captured. The son was a member of this group, but had been unable to ride with them because of his injuries.

"Oh, that's wonderful news that your son was spared."

The old man just looked at them and said, "Maybe good, maybe not so good. Who knows?"

Every living being has the potential to be free from suffering and to develop limitless love and compassion for others. Most of us live in the illusion that things outside us are solid, that they have inherent properties apart from our perception of them. Whether or not this is true is an age-old debate. But if we pay attention, we can observe that our thoughts and opinions have a lot to do with our view of the world. In a manner of speaking, our thoughts and views create our world.

The brain is a wonderfully complex organ which takes in stimuli and creates thoughts. But the thoughts are not the same as the stimuli producing them. The sounds we hear inside our head are not the same as the vibrations that created the acoustic waves that strike our ear drum. We may be listening to a beautiful concert with a friend, but in a sense, we are each hearing our own concert.

In a similar manner, our interpretation of events is not the same thing as the event itself; it is only our interpretation. We get into trouble when we act as if the interpretation were real.

Dependent co-arising is the term Buddhists use to describe the interdependent web of cause and effect, the interplay between the observer and the observed. The Buddha teaches that things don't exist from their own side. Think about it. We each see the world through our own set of filters. We add our judgments and interpretations, throw in a little (or a lot) of meaning, temper with our experience, and we come up with a sense of reality that seems very real to us. But it's not. It's just our interpretation.

Once we realize this, we can consider the potential that exists in every situation. For if we are projecting meaning onto everything, wouldn't it be incredible if we could have some flexibility and choice about what meaning to project? This isn't to imply that we can change matter through wishful thinking. But it does give us a lot more power than a more rigid world view.

❁ Lotus Lessons ❁

While visiting a small Tibetan village, I strolled into a shop and saw a tray of momos *on display.* Momos *are tasty Tibetan dumplings, stuffed with meat and vegetables, and then steamed in boiling water. They come in many different shapes and sizes, and such a variety of pretty patterns. Gesturing, I selected a few of them. "I'll take one of these, and two of those... and three of the little ones." I eagerly bit first into one and then another and then another. To my dismay, they all tasted exactly the same.*

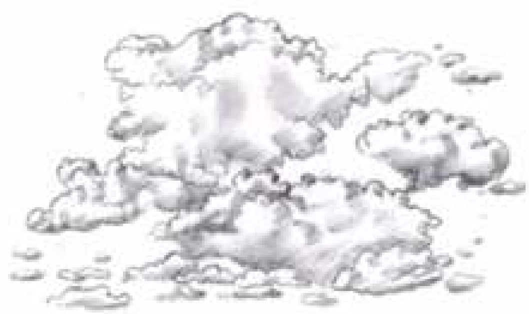
I learned an important lesson that day. Though many things may have very different appearances and can look pretty on the outside, their essence is exactly the same! It turns out that this applies to a potential job, new car, prospective relationship...whatever. We shouldn't be fooled by appearances. So much is in our perspective. We need to deal with what we have as well as we can.

You may hate your job and your company, but if you leave for another company the same situations will probably come up, until you learn to deal with them. Give it your best shot. Then if it doesn't work out, leave. Gracefully.

Exercise: Can you think of examples from your business in which things were not as fixed as they seemed? Can you see the benefit of seeing the potential in all things?

9. Your Inner Witness

Breaking Free from the Mind Trap



Summer Clouds

See all of this world
as a star at dawn,
a flash of lightning in a summer cloud,
a flickering flame, a phantom, and a dream.
The Buddha

Tales from Tibet (and beyond)

A very unpleasant, disagreeable monk lived in a remote monastery in Tibet. He complained constantly, and none of the other monks liked him. One day, he announced that he had had it, and was going to leave. The monks celebrated for days, they were so happy to be rid of him.

The abbot observed this behavior, and some time later disappeared for a week. When he returned, he was accompanied by the errant monk.

"How could you allow this fellow follow you back here? We were happy to be rid of him!"

"Let him? I had to beg him. He is our greatest teacher. He teaches us to be patient, to be mindful, to watch our thoughts. Please welcome your brother back home."

Perhaps the most disabling problem we have is taking our thoughts too seriously. This is the primary cause of suffering. We are not inclined to question our perceptions. That is the nature of the ego. Society reinforces the notion that we are our thoughts, and we have been trained since childhood to believe this is so. Our minds create traps that are difficult to escape.

But there is another way to look at reality. We are able to move to a higher spiritual ground if we observe our feelings, beliefs, and thoughts. We can diminish the power of our thoughts by not taking them so seriously. By being mindful, we can chose whether to act or to be still. This is called "developing the inner witness." It is a process of observing our thoughts, emotions, and reactions in a non-judgmental way, and seeing that we have choices about how we behave. It is a way out of the trap of automatically reacting to every outside event.

❁ Lotus Lessons ❁

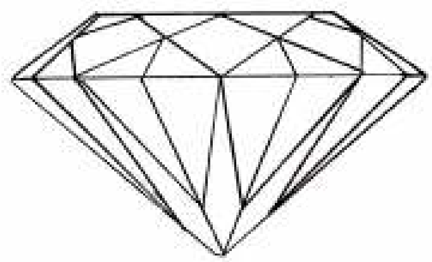
You are who you think you are. But who you think you are isn't really who you are. You're much more magnificent than that. -- Stan Dale, Bodhisattva

Many people feel that whenever they have a thought or a feeling, they should express them right away. That by holding things in, they are somehow bottling up all this emotional energy, and it might eventually burst out in some uncontrolled fashion, or even cause some kind of horrible internal damage. But this isn’t true. Experience shows that it can be far more dangerous to express negative feelings than to let them dissipate. Things said in anger can’t be taken back. Once harsh words leave your lips, they are out there, forever.

Exercise: The next time you have a disturbing or negative thought, don’t act on it. Just wait. Like the weather, if you wait long enough, things will change. And when you do chose to act, you will be coming from a more powerful place. This will make you far more effective in your business life.

10. Mindfulness

Clarity, Purity, and Hidden Potential



Buddhist teachings hold diamonds

to represent purity and potential

Relentlessly pass the days and nights.

"How well am I using my time?"

This should be reflected on again and again...

The Buddha

Tales from Tibet (and beyond)

Traveling in India (or any third world country) can be a real challenge for westerners. We are in such a hurry! We worship efficiency, schedules, and instant gratification.

I was riding a bus way out in the country, and we stopped at a railroad crossing because the guard rails were down, the lights were flashing and the chimes were ringing. Soon, traffic was backed up as far as the eye could see. And yet, the only train in sight was parked 25 yards down the tracks, and the engineers were on the lawn eating their lunch. Obviously, the train wasn't going anywhere soon.

I walked to the depot office and asked one of the clerks why the traffic was being held up.

"Oh, the schedule says the train should be coming through now, so it is our policy to put the guardrails down until it passes."

I began fuming. Nothing ever works in India! No wonder this country is so backward and messed up.

I walked back to the road, and saw families relaxing under shade trees, playing with their children, drinking tea. It looked like I was the only one was uptight, or even cared about the situation. And then it dawned on me: where I was going just wasn't that important. And "there" was no better than "here", anyway. "Now" was all there was.

I laughed, and joined my fellow passengers.

Only when we are living in the present are we non-reactive. In the present, we can develop compassion and see things as they are. This is the path that leads away from suffering and toward happiness. Developing our skills allows us to serve others more effectively. Together, compassion and skillful means create wisdom and open the heart. And this framework can be a powerful force in your work.

How you see the world has everything to do with how you do business. If you interpret the world as being stressful and hostile, rather than as an interesting and entertaining challenge, it will have an enormous impact on how you act. It all comes down to your beliefs about the world, and your insight and understanding about how your beliefs and thoughts create your experience of the world. I would like to suggest that we can (and should) participate in creating our reality.

❁ Lotus Lessons ❁

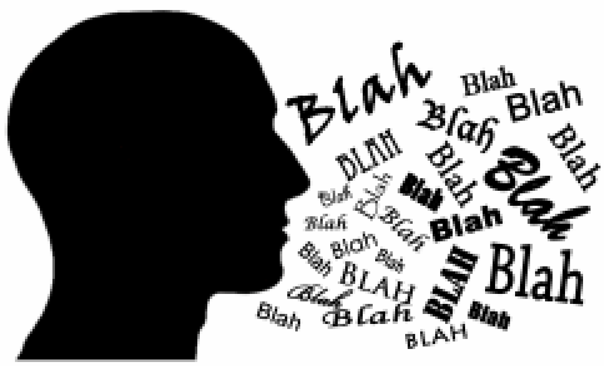
Jim M is one of the best salesperson I ever met. Certainly, he possesses the fundamental sales skills necessary to do his job: territory management, prospecting, good communications skills, product knowledge - things like that. But what makes him amazing is that for him selling is just an excuse, or a means, to meet people, connect with them, and to provide them a service. The actual selling of a product seems to be a side-effect, or natural consequence of these actions. His customers are happy, come back to him, and refer their colleagues to him. Selling has become a way for him to express his spirituality. He is certainly a Buddha in a business suit.

Since there are so many realities, why not choose the one that feels the best, lets you be most effective and gets you what you want? You need to look beyond your normal limited perspective, and see the possibilities that exist. Within the context of business, that's what Heartful Management *is all about.*

11. Right Speech

A bird that you set free may be caught again,

but a word that escapes your lips will not return.



Rare are helpful speakers,

Listeners are rarer,

But rarer still are words

Which though unpleasant help at once.

What is not deceitful is the truth

And not a fabrication of the mind.

What to others is solely helpful is the truth,

The opposite is falsehood since it does not help.

Nagarjuna, an Indian Saint

Tales from Tibet (and beyond)

Despite the atrocities committed by the Chinese government against the people and land of Tibet, the Dalai Lama always speaks kindly about them, and in a conciliatory manner. He advocates peaceful actions and education in order to transform the situation.

Though many younger Tibetans are impatient, and want to take more direct action, The Dalai Lama cautions that acts of violence can only have negative effects down the road. He teaches that it is not only our actions, but our words that can harm or heal.

Words can express love or fear, truths or falsehoods. In business, having a reputation for honesty and speaking kindly are valuable assets. If we lose our money, we can always borrow some from a friend. If we lose our reputation for having integrity, no one can give it back to us.

Often things are said that are hurtful, insensitive, or not entirely truthful. To practice *Right Speech* means that we are mindful of what we say, and are aware of the harm we can cause others by not paying attention to what comes out of our mouth.

The first step toward practicing right speech is to cultivate an awareness of our thoughts--to watch how the thoughts arise, and how they get transformed into speech or action. Once we become proficient at observing this process, we are in a position to choose which thoughts get spoken and which do not. Practice this discipline in meetings, dealing with staff, your clients and customers, and see what a difference it makes.

❃ Lotus Lessons ❃

Dr. Joseph Lister introduced the idea of cleanliness and antisepsis into medicine at the turn of the century (they named Listerine after him). He knew that the failure of many physicians to practice elementary hygiene (like washing their hands) was killing their patients. He was not very skillful at social interaction and discourse, though. He would barge into medical conferences, point an accusing finger, and shout "Murderers!" at his colleagues. This did not make him popular. Do you think they listened to him or believed him? Of course not. They thought he was a dangerous, demented nut and they spurned him.

He died a broken, discouraged man, and it took many years for people to examine his ideas, find merit in them, and implement them. In the meantime, a lot of people who might have been helped by his discoveries weren't.

He was correct in his views, but totally wrong in his approach. The lesson is that you must communicate in a way that people can hear what you are saying, because people tend to react negatively when they feel attacked. This applies to any idea, suggestion or criticism. You have to take other people's feelings into account if you have any hope of being effective.

Exercise: Pay attention to yourself during your business meetings, phone conversations, and interactions with your colleagues. Are the words coming out of your mouth the ones you wish? Are they skillful and compassionate, rather than divisive and cynical? It's not easy. Mindfulness is a full-time job.

12. Right Action

First, Do No Harm



An idea that is developed and put into action
is more important than an idea that exists only as an idea.
The Buddha

Tales from Tibet (and beyond)

The Tibet Justice Center is a non-profit agency committed to self-determination for the Tibetan People. Many of the members are attorneys who specialize in international law.

Through legal action and education, the Center advocates human rights, environmental protection, and peaceful resolution of the situation in Tibet. They provide research, expert testimony, and lobbying efforts on behalf of the people of Tibet.

They support numerous projects and disseminate many publications and research projects each year. Their dedication and compassion have a much greater chance of producing the desired results because of their blend of skill and compassion.

From a Buddhist perspective, our view of the world forms our thoughts and our actions. Therefore, *right view* yields *right thoughts* and *right actions*. *Right action* means to act kindly and compassionately, to be honest, to respect the belongings of others, and to abstain from sexual misconduct.

Business is often perceived as an action-oriented pursuit. So doesn't it makes sense to consider all our actions and make sure they are in harmony with our intent?

Everyone knows that what we do may help or harm people. However, our inactions may also be helpful or harmful. Since each situation is unique, and don't always know the consequences of our actions, "do not harm" should be our guiding precept.

❁ Lotus Lessons ❁

How many organizations do you know of that repeat the same practices year after year without getting the results they want? Or that treat employees and customers without dignity and compassion, then wonder why they are not succeeding?

None of us has perfect knowledge, nor can we be certain of the outcomes or unintended consequences of our actions or decisions. The best we can is ask ourselves over and over again: "Will what I am about to do benefit as many people as possible? Am I avoiding causing any harm?"

Extra credit: We all make mistakes. But we often have opportunities to fix them. Make a list of all persons we have harmed and are willing and able to make amends.

13. Right Thought

The Antidote to Ignorance and Suffering



We are what we think.

All that we are arises with our thoughts.

With our thoughts we make the world.

Speak or act with a pure mind and heart

And happiness will follow you

As your shadow, unshakable.

The Dhammapada

Tales from Tibet (and beyond)

There was once an old Tibetan man who kept returning to the local movie theater in Lhasa to see the same picture again and again. Finally, the ticket taker could contain his curiosity no longer, and asked the man why he kept coming back to see the same movie.

"Well," the old man said: "There's this scene where three lovely sisters are about to go skinny dipping in a stream. Just as they are about to remove their clothes, a heard of yaks comes by and blocks the view. And when it finally passes, the women are already up to their chins in the water."

"But that doesn't explain why you keep coming back," said the ticket taker. "Why do you do it?"

"I figure one of these days, those yaks are going to be late!" explained the old man.

This story is a classic example of how our grasping minds are the cause of suffering and irrational behavior. By struggling harder and harder, we hope that we will finally get what we want, and then we will be happy. But like the man who keeps on buying tickets, we are bound to be disappointed.

Our thoughts determine how we feel and behave, and ultimately how we treat people. This is the area where there is the greatest opportunity for change.

Thinking of others' well-being will generate feelings of compassion, and our actions will follow. Ignorance, anger, and fear can lead to emotional illness and harmful behaviors. *Right Thought* is the Buddhist antidote.

Often, we convince ourselves that our thoughts are real. We become self-righteous and attached to them even when they may be harmful to us or others.

For example, consider prejudice--one of the most harmful kinds of thoughts. If we believe that we are superior to someone else, we are no longer seeing them as human beings like us. We make them different in our minds, and experience only our fear and other projections. This false view allows us to demean and demonize other people. We harm both ourselves and others.

It is obvious that we may harm others because our thoughts can lead to violence. But how can our thoughts hurt us? Medical experts tell us that our thoughts can cause ulcers, heart disease, depression, and many other problems. Our thoughts can also hinder our spiritual development. We must examine our thoughts closely and let go of the ones which do not serve us or others.

How can we tell the difference? Examples of thoughts which do not serve us are negative thoughts, such as anger and fear, and thoughts which we use to beat ourselves up (or others). They will only cause us harm.

Loving and compassionate thoughts are the only ones that serve. Ignore the rest. This is not so easy, but once we learn to discriminate between our views and the way things really are, we can make healthy choices.

❁ Lotus Lessons ❁

Susan W, the president of a large clothing manufacturing company on the West Coast was outraged that she was paying huge commission checks to her East Coast distributor every month, who, while apparently expending very little effort, had somehow increased sales and market share of Susan's products by 50%. Surely, she could save some money by selling directly into that territory and "eliminating the middle man." So Susan fired him and saved the commission. The next thing she saw was her sales plummet by 50%. She ate a little humble pie, and bought the distributor back. She decided, wisely, that it's better to be successful than "right".

Consider this Buddhist saying: "Your worst enemy cannot harm you as much as your own unguarded thoughts."

Exercise: Pay attention to the thoughts and judgments you make about people and situations. Try to discern the difference between "what happened" and your thoughts about what happened. The stories your thoughts create usually include a lot of "why's" or reasons for what happened. Again, don't judge yourself, just observe.

14. Right Livelihood

State-of-the-Heart Careers



our work is to discover your world and
then with all your heart give yourself to it.

The Buddha

Tales from Tibet (and beyond)

In a small Himalayan village hundreds of miles from his native Tibet, an artist is thoughtfully carving a wood block which will be used for making beautiful ink block prints. There is a peaceful smile on his face as he stops to show me his progress. Nearby, a group of women are weaving rugs that will be sold to an American trading company to provide income for their families. The women are talking softly and laughing at the antics of the children playing in the courtyard outside. They are sharing this space with several other workers who are producing the staples needed for everyday life.

They have suffered a great deal, yet they are happy and their business is thriving. When I talk to them about their situation, there is no trace of bitterness or resentment, only compassion. They are smiling, and their gentle manner and contentment are so genuine they leave me with an uncanny sense of inner peace. I've never been around people who enjoyed their work so much.

You've got to love your job. Imagine waking up every morning thinking: "WOW! I get to go to work today! Am I lucky! What I do makes a difference! And to think, I get paid for this!"

That's the way it's supposed to be, and that's the way it can be. As a wise sage once said, *Choose a job you love and you'll never have to work a day in your life* .

What we do for a living and how we treat each other as we make our living are as important to our success, happiness, and spiritual development as are prayer and meditation. Viewed from this perspective, work is a spiritual practice.

Right Livelihood involves finding a way to make a living that benefits both ourselves and others. It is a commitment to working with integrity and awareness. Above all, it is avoiding causing harm to others or the environment. To paraphrase the Bible: What is the point of gaining the world if you lose your soul?

❃ Lotus Lessons ❃

Peter G. received his Ph.D. in theoretical physics from MIT. The majority of jobs available to him were with universities and government agencies doing nuclear weapons work. He spent a few years doing applied research in the area of high-energy atomic physics, when he finally decided that he could not reconcile his personal beliefs with how he was making a living. He resigned his post, and took a job as a programmer for a small engineering firm. He found this work unsatisfying; he was making a living, but not putting his vast knowledge to use.

As someone committed to right livelihood, he continued his search for the right job, and finally found a good match: he focused on biomedical research, and is developing high-technology solutions to medical problems. He has found a way to make a good living while doing satisfying work that makes a real contribution. And he loves his job.

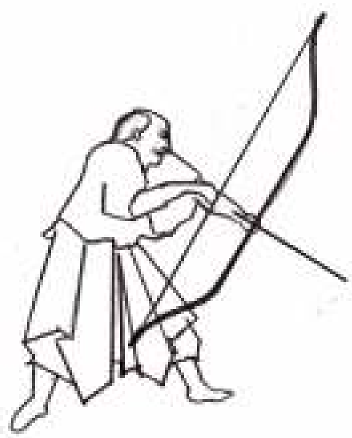
Are you searching for the right job which will make you happy? If you look within, you'll realize that finding the perfect career is an "inside job."

Exercise: Make a list of the things that are important to you, your values, dreams, aspirations. Is what you're doing making a difference? Are you making sure that you're doing no harm?

Extra Credit: When you're 80 years old, sitting in your rocking chair on the porch, will you feel good about what you did with your life?

15. Skillful Means

Putting Your Notion in Motion



I will conquer everything

And nothing at all shall conquer me!

I, a son of the Lion-like Conqueror,

Should remain self-confident in this way.

Shantideva

Tales from Tibet (and beyond)

After fleeing from the Chinese invasion, the Dalai Lama and thousands of other Tibetan refugees faced huge challenges. They needed to set up systems to provide shelter, food, and health care for their community. Further, the Dalai Lama needed to provide for the economic well being of his people, while at the same time keeping their culture alive. Under his leadership, the community has created schools, drafted a constitution and has taken their case to the world community.

The Dalai Lama has succeeded in keeping the Tibetan Community intact, even though they may be years away from being able to return to their own country. His genius is that he is able to see what is possible, and then implement it. He has never lost hope, never advocated violence, and has proposed creative solutions to a seemingly deadlocked situation.

The Dalai Lama has held together a community which has been displaced and persecuted by providing vision and leadership. He is the perfect embodiment of a Heartful Manager*.*

Skillful Means implies that one has the necessary talents, expertise, and knowledge to get things done. But it takes more than wishful thinking to get things done. We may mean well, and still be unable to accomplish tasks because we lack knowledge, experience, or skill. Compassion alone is not enough. If we want to help others, we will work very hard to be effective. We will do whatever it takes in the way of time, energy, dedication, and effort.

For a variety of reasons (including inadequate funding, aversion to appearing "too businessee", or a lack of focus), many nonprofit and social services agencies fall short in this area. They are often perceived as being less effective than their for-profit counterparts. This does not need to be so.

Commitment and discipline are needed to learn accounting, financial management, marketing, operations, planning, and other so-called mundane tasks. However, these activities are absolutely necessary and must be mastered by every organization if they are to effectively fulfill their mission.

We would all like to be successful. But success sometimes seems to be as elusive as happiness. There is so much to know, so many skills to master. If only meaning well were enough! As important as compassion and sensitivity are, the Buddha stressed cultivating skillful means as well. Once again, this is a reflection of the need for balance, following the middle path. Tedious as such tasks as balancing the books, strategic planning, and marketing may seem, done with compassion and wisdom, they are an important part of our spiritual practice.

❁ Lotus Lessons ❁

My friend, Barbara has a passion for coffee. Her roaster and cafe processed over fifteen tons of coffee beans every year. One evening, an overheated roaster started a fire in her store, destroying all her equipment. She wondered if she would be able to hold on to her customers, who had grown accustomed to her custom blends.

She got on the telephone and arranged alternate sources of coffee, while scurrying around looking for a new roasting machine. Within a month she was back in business, and didn't lose a single account.

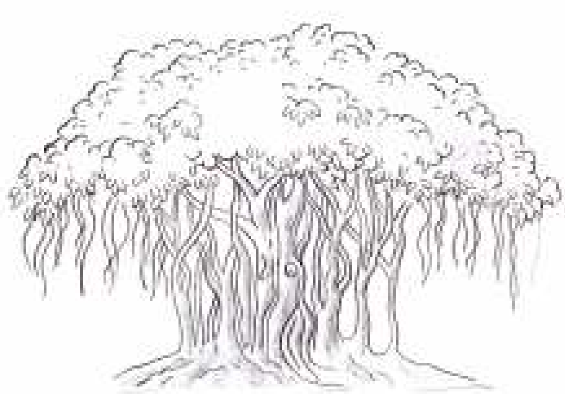
By accepting the circumstance, and not wasting any energy on bemoaning her fate, she was able to deal with a devastating situation in a very positive and effective manner. And because she is responsible and practices skillful means, you won't be surprised to learn that she had insurance.

Compassion without competence is only half the way there. List the skills you would like to develop more fully in order to be more effective in your job. Make a commitment to yourself about when and how you are going to acquire those skills.

Extra credit: Ask the people you manage, "what are the things I do that make it easier for you to do your job, that actually empower you?" Then ask them "what are the things I do that make it more difficult for you to do your job?" This can be a very eye-opening experience.

16. Patience

The Biggest Challenge of All



After many years of practicing austerities without the results he wanted, Buddha sat under a Boddhi Tree, where he resolved not to rise until he attained enlightenment.

The ultimate perfection of patience does not come from endurance or a re-evaluation of a situation.
Rather it comes from the absence of our habitual, automatic triggers and reactive hooks to the challenges of life.
Gil Fronsdal, Buddhist Meditation Teacher

Tales from Tibet (and beyond)

After years of studying together, two young monks, determined to achieve enlightenment in their life time, agreed to separate, and meet up again in five years, at which time they would compare notes, and see who had progressed the furthest along this path.

At the agreed upon time, the two monks met again by the banks of a river.

"What have you accomplished?" asked the first.

"Well, said his friend, "I worked and studied very hard. I prayed and meditated. It was very difficult, but I think I am now a little more patient than I used to be. How about you?"

"I, too, studied, mediated and worked very hard," said the monk. "I have accomplished something rather miraculous. See that ferry man taking people across the river for five rupees? I don't need to take the ferry. I can walk on water now," he bragged.

The first monk was a bit puzzled and looked upon his friend with sadness. "You mean you spent all those years meditating, studying, and praying just so you could save five rupees?"

If you take away only one thing from this book, make it this: Patience is the key to being a *Heartful Manager*. Patience is the antidote to anger. And anger is one of the key causes of unhappiness and suffering. Without patience, there is no space for compassion and understanding. Without compassion and understanding, there is no wisdom.

Whenever someone irritates or upsets you; or you find yourself becoming emotionally charged over an issue; or you find yourself not thinking clearly -- the one thing that will fix all of these problems is patience.

Sounds easy, but it's not. Practicing patience can be a real challenge. Patience is one of the most difficult states to acquire, and takes a lot of practice. Even the Dalai Lama admits that after years of meditation and study, patience is still the most difficult attribute to master. So, be patient with yourself in your quest for patience!

❃ Lotus Lessons ❃

As a consultant, I've worked with many companies and organizations. The consistent finding I made was the 90% of the problems these groups had were "people" problems, not technical problems. If people are upset, impatient, and when there is little trust or understanding, it takes a tremendous effort to tackle any problem. Once people are calm and open, solving problems is a much more straightforward endeavor.

Exercise: Call to mind a time when you were impatient, and reacted to a situation rather than slowed down and let your emotions pass. Do you think you would have made better choices, had better outcomes, if you had practiced patience?

Next time you are feeling impatient, take a deep breath, pause, and contemplate the harm you are about to do yourself and others. Don't react. Be still. There can be no clarity when your mind is in turmoil. There can be no skillful means, there can only be more suffering.

When you are feeling calm, then you may proceed, knowing you will most likely be acting with greater compassion and skill than had you reacted with impatience.

17. How To Get Things Done

Compassion in Action



May I be a protector to those without protection

A leader for those who journey

And a boat, a passage

For those desiring the further shore.

Shantideva, a Buddhist Saint

Tales from Tibet (and beyond)

Every year, a team of physicians and volunteers from the Seva Foundation goes into the remotest areas of Nepal to perform cataract surgery and offer other medical treatment. If you've ever been in a third-world country, you can appreciate the near-impossibility of providing medical care in such difficult, primitive environments.

A sense of purpose and a sense of humor make it possible for this group to do significant work in challenging situations. To many people, taking on such tasks seems hopeless, but Wisdom--and knowing that we can make a difference--enables them (and us) to do amazing things.

Buddhists stress the importance of balance -- between instinct and logic; between going with the flow, and being in total control. Or put another way: Have faith in the universe, but have a plan just in case. This is also called "taking the middle path."

In many companies, people seem to be afraid of making decisions. Nobody wants to be caught making a mistake. It seems like it's safer to do nothing.

Effectively managing a business involves making a lot of decisions, solving problems and putting out fires. We find that while most people feel free to offer criticism, few will have constructive suggestions. Therefore, the one with the plan, the one with the courage to take action, will become the leader.

Clarity is also essential to getting things done. Operating in chaos is like looking for diamonds in a mud puddle. If you can't see a situation clearly, you will grope around and waste time, energy, and money and make everyone around you crazy. Once you can see the way things are, your course of action will often be obvious.

When the proverbial yak dung hits the fan (as it inevitably will), many people will duck and run for cover. *Heartful Managers* figure out how to shut off the fan, thereby transforming the situation.

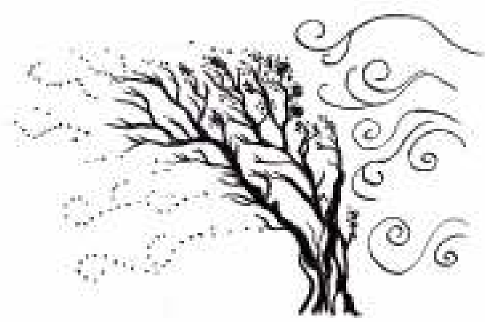
❋ Lotus Lessons ❋

The Shanti Project was a well-meaning, compassionate, service-oriented group, which providing housing for AIDS victimsThey lost their funding, and therefore the ability to provide these services, because of their poor record keeping practices. No one accused them of dishonesty, just disorganization. This is tragic and is all-too-typical in service organizations. Often they have an abundance of compassion, but are short on skillful means.

On the other end of the spectrum, many people of my generation will remember the protests aimed at DOW Chemical company during the Vietnam War. DOW made the best napalm our technology could concoct and our tax dollars could buy. But look at the suffering and inhumanity that resulted from "better living through chemistry." Who could ever forget the stark images in Life magazine of the young woman and child running from a bombed-out village, clothes and bodies in flames? Lots of skillful means, little compassion.

18. Dealing with Adversity

Weathering the Storm



Through not giving comes poverty,

Through wrong livelihood, deception,

Through arrogance a bad lineage,

Through jealousy little beauty.

Nagarjuna, an Indian Saint

<u>Tales from Tibet (and beyond)</u>

The word Buddha *literally means "awakened one." There have been many thousands of Buddhas throughout the ages. In fact, Buddhists believe that each and every one of us has the Buddha nature within us. That is, our essence is pure, we possess great wisdom and are capable of acting skillfully while feeling deep compassion for all beings.*

These traits, however, are often obscured by ignorance, fear and grasping. The Tibetan term Kukpa *describes a person burdened with these delusions – someone who is not quite awake and aware, a person who is naive, unaware, foolish and unskillful. They are trapped by ignorance and self-centered behavior.*

If we look deeply enough, most of the problems we have in business turn out to be people problems. It seems that there are so many difficult people to deal with every single day at work!

It is important to stay respectful and compassionate even when people are acting in ways that seem hurtful or harmful to us. The best way to do that is to keep in mind that no matter how a person is presenting on the outside, their inner nature is always pure. When they act otherwise, it is because of their own ignorance. Sometimes, it helps to bring in a humorous element.

Although there is no real equivalent term in English to *Kukpa*, it may help to conjure up the image of a clown. Clowns can be clumsy and outrageous, bumbling and foolish. We all have a little of the Bozo within us. And here is the challenge: if we can see the essence of the person, rather than their ignorance, then we can stay focused on compassion. And this especially applies to ourselves. We need to be gentle with ourselves when we get caught up in ego-grasping and ignorance. Better to laugh at ourselves than to take this aspect seriously.

There are a lot of reasons to strive to become a *Heartful Manager*, not the least of which it is the best position possible from which to deal with difficult people. The primary reason is that it allows us to be effective and successful while working in a manner consistent with our beliefs and principles.

The core of Tibetan Buddhist practice involves the desire to see the end of suffering for all people, *without exception*. This can be a challenge. There are some people we just don't like. And some people act as if they actually want to cause us harm.

We’re certain they don't care about us. Why should we wish them well?

What would it be like if we could eliminate difficult people from our life, and learn how to transform situations from stressful to calm? We would be more successful and happier at work, wouldn’t we?

Practicing compassion can actually accomplish both of these things. Because when we realize that, to some extent, we are creating the difficult people in our life (by reacting, getting angry, being unskillful), we can change and transform the situation.

When we bring good feelings to the workplace, even the most negative people tend to change (because it feels good to be around positive energy). By staying compassionate and respectful, you have given them the opportunity to see the Buddha within themselves, and to express their best parts.

It may be that some people will be incapable of change. They may not be able to stand being in a fun, successful organization and will leave on their own. Either way, you win.

But what do you do if they don’t change, and won’t leave? Their energy can influence an organization in a very negative way. It is important to do all you can to prevent them, in their ignorance, from causing harm to your organization. If not, you may have to skillfully keep them from harming your organization by removing them.

❅ Lotus Lessons ❅

No matter how much you plan, there are always unexpected things which happen. Seeing these as opportunities and how you deal with them is what separates Heartful Managers *from* Kukpas*.*

Some people operate in a constant state of crisis, and want you to believe that you can't live without them. People who are frantically running around putting out fires are not really effective managers. Often, they are the ones starting the fires. Or pouring gasoline on them.

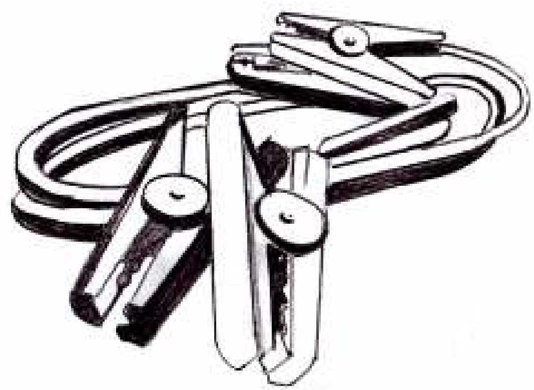
Heartful Managers often appear as if they are hardly doing anything at all. Things just seem to work well for them. They may seem lucky, but what they're really doing is anticipating problems and preempting them. They are in control. They don't panic. Heartful Managers avoid extremes. They know that their actions are powerful, and that the one with the plan wins.

Exercise: Executing a plan is like going down the rapids. You don't need to know your exact destination, you just have to aim in the general direction. And hold on. Put these principles into practice, and you will see results.

Extra Credit: If you ever get really depressed and frustrated, just pull a pair of underpants over your head, look in the mirror and say to yourself "I am a Kukpa, I am a total Bozo...." Tell yourself how truly horrible everything is. Really get into it. You can't stay depressed for long.

19. Jump Starting Heartful Management

Crossing the Chasm



However many holy words you read,

however many you speak,

what good will they do you

if you do not act on upon them?

The Buddha

Tales from Tibet (and beyond)

The Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition is an international, non-profit organization, founded in 1975 by Lama Thubten Yeshe, a Tibetan Buddhist monk.

When Lama Yeshe was driven out of Tibet by the Chinese, he had no idea what he was going to do, but he was dedicated to service and sharing his knowledge with others. He started his first training center at a monastery in Nepal, and then things really took off.

He said, "When we started establishing centers there was no overall plan – they just popped up randomly all over the world like mushrooms…."

But he did have a vision. And sometimes that is the most important piece of all. They are now involved in numerous projects around the world, including:

- *Monasteries and nunneries in 6 countries*
- *Liberation Prison Project*
- *Leprosy Clinics*
- *Polio Clinics*
- *Health and Nutrition Clinics*
- *Meditation Centers in 33 Countries*
- *Hospices*

“How do I get *there* from *here*?” you might ask. How do I become a *Heartful Manager*? It all comes down to perspective, knowledge, choice, and faith. These are connected in a circular way, because having faith allows us to chose our perspective.

There is an old saying from the East: “You can't leap over a chasm in two bounds.” Many times in life, we have to make a go or no-go decision. To hesitate is worse than no decision. It can be fatal. Consider the challenge of blasting a rocket ship into orbit. If the fuel is burned slowly, the rocket won’t accelerate fast enough to reach escape velocity. When the fuel is exhausted, it will plunge back to earth. However, if the ignited fuel burns rapidly, the ship will escape gravity's pull and zoom out into the cosmos. That's what a *Heartful Manager* does: makes a commitment and goes for it -- a leap of faith. You just have to do it. It works.

❁ Lotus Lessons ❁

When I developed the Teknar Proscan, a medical device to aid in the early detection and treatment of prostate cancer, I was told that it "couldn't be done," the technology was too complex. Thankfully, my team and I didn't listen to the naysayers. We created a corporate cultural based on getting things done and being unstoppable. We worked hard, focused on the result, and in the end, we made it work. The next hurdle was the market. We'd solved a very difficult technical problem, but who cares? Would physicians actually buy this device? My marketing forecast projected sales of a million dollars the first year. We actually sold a million dollars worth of units the first month! More importantly, we enriched the lives of everyone involved in the project and the process. It was truly a Heartful Organization.

You have the power and knowledge to create a Heartful Organization. Heartful Organizations are supportive and fun to work in. They enhance the lives of not only those in the organization, but also those with whom they come in contact. Consider the steps and actions you can take to transform your workplace into a Heartful Organization.

20. Meditations on Heartful Management

Subduing the Wild Elephant



If we subdue our mind

We shall subdue as well

The tiger, snake and elephant

And all such frightening beasts

Shantideva

Tales from Tibet (and beyond)

Buddhists like to compare the mind to a wild elephant, which when left untamed, can run amok, trampling crops and creating havoc. (There were a lot of wild elephants in India doing just that when this analogy got created. In this country, we might have used the example of skateboarders, student drivers or corporate raiders). In any case, in order to have calm and order, the wild elephant needs to be subdued.

The purpose of meditation is to clear the mind, to allow insight and wisdom into a "pure vessel." Talking about compassion is well and good. But we all get stressed out sometimes. Perhaps we get angry at our job, nervous about losing a contract, or irritable and annoyed at our co-workers. How can we be compassionate when we're all wrapped up in emotions?

We can train ourselves to be more relaxed, calm, positive and compassionate. There are a number of ways -- meditation, exercise, study, prayer, and practice, practice, practice.

Meditation, in one form or other, has been used by every culture to help people relax and become centered. Meditation can be a very powerful way to quiet our mind, relax and refresh us, and present us with a clear way to analyze problems.

A major benefit of meditation is that we often become more creative after we've quieted our mind. We have access to a deeper wisdom when all the background chatter ceases. A relaxed state of mind allows us to approach business in a calm, non-reactive manner, which is to our advantage.

There are many, many ways to meditate. (Refer to Buddhist nun Kathleen McDonald's book on meditation listed at the end of this book for a more complete description of how to meditate.) What is presented here is a very simple method you can use now. It doesn't require any particular belief system, nor is it a religion. Meditation is merely a way to see more clearly, relax, and feel better. It's a nice way to take care of yourself.

Think how much time you spend everyday taking care of other people. It's important to spend time on yourself, too.

❁ Lotus Lessons ❁

Relaxation and calming the mind
(also known as *calm abiding*)

Exercise: *Find a quiet place where you won't be bothered or distracted. Make yourself comfortable, perhaps in a chair, or sitting or lying down on the floor. Some practitioners recommend a straight, erect posture, with the eyes open (you might fall asleep if you close your eyes!) I prefer to close my eyes. Experiment to see what works for you. There is no right or wrong way to do this.*

When you are ready to begin, first consider for a moment why you are meditating -- what you hope to accomplish. Do you want to relax, calm down, gain some perspective, increase your creativity? It helps to have an awareness of this intention before you start.

Next, focus your attention on your breathing. Inhale, then count "one" as you exhale. Inhale again, then count "two" as you exhale. Repeat this until you get to 20. You can repeat this as many times as you wish. If you get distracted, start again.

Now, we Westerners always want to succeed, to excel. We really want to get to 20 without a single distracting thought, or without losing count. Please let go of this goal. There is no goal, except to quietly watch your mind. When a thought or memory does come up, simply observe it and let it go. Be gentle with yourself. There is really nothing to accomplish.

Sometimes you might find that fifteen to twenty minutes gives you the best results. At other times, you may only have five minutes. Remember: a little bit of something is a whole lot

better than a lot of nothing. So don't let time pressures keep you from taking advantage of the tremendous benefits you can appreciate from only a few minutes a day of meditation. Even just a few moments of quiet time before a meeting can make a huge difference in your outlook. Hint: there is no need to change the way you breath, breathe normally. When your mind wanders (it will, I guarantee it) gently and simply observe that thoughts are coming in, and gently and easily let them go and get back to putting your attention on your breath.

When you are through, spend a few moments to collect yourself before you jump up and get back into the outer world. Consider again your intention for meditation. I always like to add a small prayer that any merits (however small) that might come from my practice benefit everyone.

Conclusion

Thanks for everything.

I have no complaints whatsoever.

The first and last utterance every day of an old Buddhist Nun

I believe you will find the practice of *Heartful Management* more pleasant and productive than the old ways of doing business. You've been exposed to some ideas about compassion and skillful means. You have learned that one without the other doesn't do anyone much good -- they need to be integrated into your life.

So, how do you put these ideas together? Well, life offers you a lot of choices. The key is that you've got to make good choices, and for this, you need a calm mind and a positive outlook.

No one is born a *Heartful Manager*. To get the most out of this book, you have to put these principles into practice. You just have to do things, try things out. And make mistakes. And learn from those mistakes. If you're fortunate, you'll have teachers along the way, or a mentor if you're really lucky. You may get some ideas from a lecture or from reading an article. Or a book. Perhaps this book. But at some point, you just have to do it. May you have happiness and success on your journey.

Recommended Readings

Thousands of candles can be lit from a single candle,
and the life of the candle will not be shortened.
Happiness never decreases by being shared.
The Buddha

- *The Art of Happiness: A Handbook for Living*, by the Dalai Lama
- *Cutting Through Spiritual Materialism*, by Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche
- *Transforming Problems into Happiness,* by Lama Zopa Rinpoche
- *How to Meditate, A Practical Guide*, by Kathleen McDonald
- *Buddhism for Beginners*, by Thubten Chodron
- *Buddhism without Beliefs*, by Stephen Batchelor
- *Siddhartha*, by Hermann Hesse
- *Freedom in Exile*, by His Holiness, the Dalai Lama
- *The Diamond Cutter: The Buddha on Managing Your Business and Your Life,* by Geshe Michael Roach

10 Principles of Enlightened Business Management

Thanks to Gary Hirsch, (Enlightened Business Institute)

1. Enhance the well-being of others.
2. Respect your financial commitments.
3. Choose wisely.
4. Convey only true impressions.
5. Bring people together.
6. Speak professionally and respectfully.
7. Speak about meaningful things.
8. Find happiness in what you have.
9. Celebrate the achievements of others.
10. See the hidden potential of all things

About the author and the artist/illustrator

Marc Fine is a seasoned business executive and entrepreneur, who has experience working with large concerns as well as start-ups, both in the private and public sectors. He lives on an island near Seattle, Washington, and provides business consulting to health and human services organizations. In 1989, he met the Dalai Lama in India, who told him "take back what you've found useful, and leave the rest behind." He's tried to follow that advice.

Feedback/suggestions for this book would be appreciated. You can contact the author at marc@wisdomsoft.com.

Eduardo Gutekunst is a talented artist working in many media. He has traveled extensively in Buddhist countries, in particular the Himalayan areas of Nepal and India, and has studied Tibetan art and iconography for many years. If given a choice, he says, "I would happily spend my days painting the many places I have been, in the hopes of passing on even the smallest bit of magic they have provided over the years." He lives with his family in Marin County, California.

Dedication

We dedicate this book to the well being of all sentient beings, without exception. May they be endowed with happiness, may their suffering end, and may wisdom grow in them.